

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method of enhancing network utilization for a user coupled to
2 the network via a receiver, wherein said network is operated by a network operator,
3 wherein said network offers both standard programming and enhanced content
4 programming, and wherein a plurality of content providers provide the enhanced content
5 programming over the network, the method comprising the steps of:
6 monitoring each of a plurality of user transactions between the receiver
7 and the plurality of content providers;
8 extracting transaction information from at least a portion of said plurality
9 of user transactions;
10 storing said extracted transaction information in a data base controlled by a
11 third party;
12 forming a user profile based on a combination of at least a portion of said
13 extracted transaction information;
14 identifying particular enhanced content programming based on said user
15 profile; and
16 providing the user with an option to view said identified particular
17 enhanced content programming.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said portion of said plurality of
2 user transactions from which transaction information is extracted are those user
3 transactions that have been finalized by the user.

1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein said extracted transaction
2 information is based on criteria set by the network operator.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein said extracted transaction
2 information is based on criteria set by the user.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein said extracted transaction
2 information is based on criteria set by said third party.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein said extracted transaction
2 information includes goods or services category information.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein said user profile is formed after a
2 minimum number of user transactions has been monitored.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of periodically
2 updating said user profile.

1 9. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of continuously
2 updating said user profile.

1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein said providing step is performed in
2 response to the step of receiving a user request for said identified particular enhanced
3 content programming.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein said providing step is performed in
2 response to the step of requesting specific enhanced content programming, said
3 requesting step performed by the user, wherein said particular enhanced content
4 programming is substituted for said requested specific enhanced content programming.

1 12. The method of claim 1, wherein said providing step is performed in
2 response to the step of requesting specific enhanced content programming, said
3 requesting step performed by the user, wherein said particular enhanced content
4 programming is provided in addition to said requested specific enhanced content
5 programming.

1 13. A method of enhancing network utilization for a user coupled to
2 the network via a receiver, wherein said network is operated by a network operator,
3 wherein said network offers both standard programming and enhanced content
4 programming, and wherein a plurality of content providers provide the enhanced content
5 programming over the network, the method comprising the steps of:

6 monitoring each of a plurality of user transactions between the receiver
7 and the plurality of content providers;

8 extracting transaction information from at least a portion of said plurality
9 of user transactions;

10 storing said extracted transaction information in a data base controlled by a
11 third party;

12 forming a user profile based on a combination of at least a portion of said
13 extracted transaction information; and
14 tailoring at least a portion of the enhanced content programming based on
15 said user profile.

1 14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of providing
2 the user with an option to view said tailored enhanced content programming.

1 15. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of providing
2 the user with said tailored enhanced content programming, wherein said providing step is
3 performed in response to the receipt of a user request for said tailored enhanced content
4 programming.

1 16. A network-based system for providing enhanced network
2 utilization, the system comprising:

3 a network providing both standard programming and enhanced content
4 programming;

5 a plurality of content providers providing said enhanced content
6 programming;

7 a receiver coupled to said network, said receiver capable of receiving said
8 standard programming and said enhanced content programming, said receiver capable of
9 interacting with said plurality of content providers; and

10 a third party controller coupled to said network, said third party controller
11 comprising:

12 means for monitoring information flowing between said receiver
13 and said plurality of content providers;

14 means for extracting transaction information from said monitored
15 information;

16 means for combining at least a portion of said extracted transaction
17 information to form a user profile;

18 a data base for storing at least a portion of said extracted
19 transaction information and for storing said user profile;

20 means for distinguishing enhanced content programming
21 corresponding to said user profile; and

22 means for identifying said distinguished enhanced content
23 programming to said receiver.

1 17. The network-based system of claim 16, wherein said distinguished
2 enhanced content programming is complementary to said user profile.

1 18. The network-based system of claim 16, wherein said receiver is
2 selected from the group consisting of set-top boxes, telephones, PDAs, and computers.

1 19. The network-based system of claim 16, wherein said network is
2 selected from the group consisting of cable, fiber optics, telephone lines, terrestrial
3 broadcast systems, and satellite broadcast systems.

1 20. The network-based system of claim 16, further comprising a
2 display coupled to said receiver for displaying both said standard programming and said
3 enhanced content programming.

1 21. The network-based system of claim 16, further comprising means
2 coupled to said receiver for a user to modify said user profile.

1 22. The network-based system of claim 16, further comprising means
2 coupled to said receiver for a user to input a set of criteria to be used by said third party
3 controller to determine what information to extract from said transaction information.

1 23. The network-based system of claim 16, further comprising:
2 a network operator for controlling said network; and
3 means for said network operator to input a set of criteria to be used by said
4 third party controller to determine what information to extract from said transaction
5 information.

1 24. The network-based system of claim 16, said third party controller
2 further comprising means for discriminating between initialized transaction information
3 and finalized transaction information, wherein said portion of said extracted transaction
4 information used to form said user profile is said finalized transaction information.

1 25. The network-based system of claim 16, said third party controller
2 further comprising means for periodically updating said user profile.

1 26. The network-based system of claim 16, said third party controller
2 further comprising means for continuously updating said user profile.

1 27. The network-based system of claim 16, said means for monitoring
2 information further comprising means for detecting triggers within said enhanced content
3 programming.